



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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OFFICE OF  
SOLID WASTE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

7/25/91

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Region IX's Request for Concurrence for  
Nationally Significant Removal Action  
at the Bluewater Uranium Mine Sites,  
Prewitt, Navajo Nation, New Mexico

FROM: *Stephen D. Luftig*  
Stephen D. Luftig, Director  
Emergency Response Division

TO: Henry L. Longest II, Director  
Office of Emergency and Remedial Response

Region IX requests your concurrence on the attached action memorandum for this nationally significant action. The Region has determined that conditions exist at the above site that could cause the local population and wildlife to be exposed to unsafe external gamma radiation and radionuclides.

The high emissions of gamma radiation emitted from the tailing piles may adversely effect local public health and wildlife. It is probable that the radionuclides are entering into the local food chain as the livestock ingests the contaminated biota. According to the Region, the sites are included on one parcel of land. The sites are located on four Indian Allotments, and one parcel of Federal land which is administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The action memorandum includes a separate DOE parcel of land. The Region's plans are to reduce the immediate potential radiological hazards associated with the two mine sites and conduct the response action in three phases:

- Phase 1: For areas with frequent public and grazing use, grade and apply earth cover to areas emitting gamma radiation greater than 150 uR/hr;
- Phase 2: Fill, seal and cap mine adits, inclines, and ventilation shafts to reduce radon gas emissions;



Phase 3: For areas with limited public use, post signs warning of radiological hazards in English, Spanish and Navajo.

The proposed action adheres to the "Guidance on Non-NPL Removal Actions Involving Nationally Significant or Precedent-Setting Issues", OSWER Directive 9360.0-19. This action will cost \$629,770.00 and take approximately 3 weeks to complete.

I recommend that you concur with this action memorandum. If you concur, please sign the attached sheet. If you do not concur, this package must be forwarded to the Assistant Administrator for OSWER(AA). Under CERCLA delegations of authority, only the AA is able to non-concur.

Attachments